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Bush Nomination Cleared by Panel

By Walter Pincus

Washington Post Staff Writer

The Senate Armed Services Committee yesterday approved 12 to 4 the nomination of Ambassador George Bush to be director of the Central Intelligence Agency after President Ford said he would no longer consider Bush as a vice presidential running mate.

A letter containing Mr. Ford's assurance was delivered to Committee Chairman John C. Stennis (D-Miss.) just before the committee met to vote on the Bush nomination.

The Ford letter, according to Senate and White House sources, changed the votes of four senators who had been prepared to vote against recommending confirmation of the former GOP congressman who also served two years as Republican national chairman.

The prospect of an 8-to-8 deadlock set off a series of White House meetings that lasted through Wednesday afternoon and into the evening.

The question, according to a White House aide, was whether the Bush nomination should be withdrawn or whether the President should respond to a suggestion made Tuesday by committee member Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.) and remove Bush from consideration for the 1976 ticket.

Bush met with the President three times during the Wednesday discussions, a White House aide reported.

Mr. Ford, in his letter to Stennis, said Bush "urged" that his name be eliminated from consideration as a candidate.

"This says something about the man and about his desire

to do this job for the nation," Mr. Ford wrote Stennis.

After facing two days of committee questioning on his political background and its implications for the CIA job, Bush reportedly told the President he respected the concern of senators who doubted his ability to remain independent with a chance at the vice presidential nomination hanging before him.

The votes against Bush were cast by Democrats Thomas McIntyre of New Hampshire, John C. Culver of Iowa, Gary Hart of Colorado and Patrick J. Leahy of Vermont. They expressed concern over the precedent of having a politician take over the CIA.

Culver said he did not want the CIA directorship to be held for only a short term. He added that he considers Bush will only serve a "transitional" period. He questioned whether a President taking office in January, 1977, if he were not Mr. Ford, would keep Bush at the CIA.

Bush has said publicly that he hopes to return to political life after he completes his tour of duty at the CIA. During his confirmation hearings Bush would commit himself to only two years at the CIA.

In his letter, Mr. Ford asked Stennis "to expedite approval" of Bush. William E. Colby is serving as CIA director until Bush is confirmed.